

THE LEADING SURGERY DESIGN TEAM AT LEVITCH DESIGN ASSOCIATES ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT

BUILDING, INTERIORS AND MARKETING IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRACTICE PRESENTATION

Style Guide

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Q *I have an older 2-chair practice in about 50 sm. The lunch area, steri, lab, store and OPG are all in one small room. It can be a bit embarrassing and it is not up to current standards. I feel I am gradually losing patients. I am looking for premises to move into and would like to have 4 chairs in the new practice. Can you give me a guideline for how much room I will need?*

A A great time to ask this question! Many dentists only think about their overall space needs when they have already signed paperwork for a space that has enchanted them for all sorts of other reasons. Often they find premises that have a couple of rooms that seem ample for conversion into surgeries. The surgery area is not even half of what you will require overall.

Our experience has taught us that there is a basic formula for estimating space needs. The basic figure to remember is that it takes about 40-45 square metres to run and service every dental chair efficiently. The chair itself doesn't use this, but think of the fact that everybody who sits there will also require a seat in a waiting room, require file storage, access to reception, create need for lab and sterilizing areas, as well as contact with staff and other professionals.



You are establishing a family practice so consider that your waiting room may need to accommodate a children's play area, extra family members for young and elderly clients and disabled access.

Of course, ample space is not your only concern when choosing a place to build your practice. Think too of things like available parking, ease of access to the building from main roads, vicinity to residential or business districts that will supply your clients, visibility, the age and type of dentists already servicing the suburb and the demographics of the area. The Australian Dental Association and relevant local council and Chamber of Commerce can all assist with such information.

Room	% of overall space
Reception	20
Administration	5
Consultation	7
Surgeries	30
Lab	3
Sterilising	5
Staff	6
WC	2
Storage	2
Wall space and corridors	20
Total	100%

What surprises most dentists is the amount of space that walls and corridors take up. But these are such a vital part of the design, not just for the obvious reasons of dividing space. Corridors need to be wider than the average space allowed in homes to enable people to pass in transit areas, especially assistants with trays and equipment. A healthcare corridor should be a minimum of 1.2m wide as this is the space required for two people to pass each other without giving way or turning sideways to pass. They are also key to creating a sense of flow, ease and logic to the overall design. Cleverly designed wall space can provide for discreet storage, ambient lighting and decorating, increased privacy and extra working and retreat areas for staff.



Q *I have just moved into my newly refurbished practice and couldn't be happier with the result, however it needs a few finishing touches. Unfortunately in my budget didn't allow for any new artwork. Could you suggest any cost-effective alternatives to purchasing artwork that might help to dress the space?*

A It sounds like you are already aware about the importance of the finishing touches. Focal points in the visual environment are critical. In the same way a woman would not consider herself properly dressed without makeup and jewelry, a practice without artworks, decorative items and flowers is just missing the finishing touch.

While good artworks can provide you with fantastic options for aesthetic and visual emphasis, as in your case, this solution isn't always an affordable option. Alternatively, however, inexpensive well-framed reproductions can be just as effective in providing the visual relief required. Also consider that any existing artworks you have may well have a new lease of life if reframed to complement your new fit-out. One hint here: If you have any existing artworks that aren't large enough to meet your needs, increasing the matt (the cardboard area between the artwork and the frame) is an easy way of giving them greater emphasis.



Another inexpensive alternative is the use of fabric panels in any areas where focal emphasis is needed. By using fabrics with interesting prints, colours or textures that complement your space, simply wrapped over timber frames can make a bold impression on a plain wall. Outside of adorning your walls, the wall surfaces themselves can also be used to great effect. For example, coloured feature walls or even murals are a great way to liven any space. Another effective alternative to purchasing artwork, and one that can also help to personalise your new practice, is to hang active family photographs or even children's artwork. The key to perceived value is in the framing, as anything can look good if framed well. It may also pay to approach any local galleries or artists you admire who might be willing to showcase their works in your practice.

We recently launched a website that stocks artworks, decorative items furniture and faux flowers suitable for healthcare practices. It illustrates the options we have been discussing – www.arkipak.com.au

Outside of adorning your walls, special lighting pieces are another great way to create interesting effects; by emphasizing colour, texture, light or shadow, they can add interest to a nook, corner or entire wall surface.

While there's no question a good refurbishment delivers powerful results, regardless of your budget, going the extra mile with artwork or finishing touches will elevate your practice presentation to an even greater level. ♦

If you would like to find out more about the above, we would be happy to evaluate your current situation and answer any of your queries. Anne Levitch & Kim McCotter can be contacted at: info@levitch.com.au or + 6 12 9880 9300.



Anne Levitch, LDA's Design Director, is a specialist designer with more than 25 years experience in healthcare design projects. A Fellow of the Design Institute of Australia, Anne has lectured on the Faculty of the Built Environment at UNSW and has presented in Australia and New Zealand on Dental Practice Presentation and Design.



Kim McCotter, Business Development & Marketing Manager, has 4 years of professional service experience and 4 years of marketing experience. His approach is professional, practical and results driven.

Levitch Design Associates (LDA) has been providing innovative design solutions to healthcare professionals for over 25 years. Offering architectural, building and interior design, through to graphic design and marketing solutions, LDA provides an integrated design approach; from the look of the building to that of your business card. For more information about LDA, please visit www.levitch.com.au